IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend the claims as follows. The claims are in the format as required by 35 C.F.R. § 1.121.

1. (Currently Amended) A method of using a router to cache inquiry data corresponding to a target device in a network having a plurality of client devices, the method comprising:

storing inquiry data corresponding to a target device in a cache memory;

receiving a request for the inquiry data corresponding to the target device;

reading the inquiry data from the cache memory; and

providing the inquiry data corresponding to the target device in response to the request.

2. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising collecting the inquiry data corresponding to the target device prior to storing the inquiry data corresponding to the target device.

3. (Original) The method of claim 2, wherein collecting the inquiry data corresponding to the target device comprises detecting the inquiry data corresponding to the target device as the inquiry data corresponding to the target device is transmitted from the target device to a requesting host device.

4. (Original) The method of claim 2, wherein collecting the inquiry data corresponding to the target device comprises detecting a request for the inquiry data corresponding to the target device as the request is routed from a host to the target device and copying the inquiry data corresponding to the target device which is returned by the target device in response to the request.

5. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein providing the inquiry data corresponding to the target device in response to the request comprises determining whether the target device is busy, and providing the stored inquiry data corresponding to the target device if the target device is busy and providing inquiry data returned by the target device if the target device is not busy.

6. (Original) The method of claim 5, wherein if the target device is not busy, the inquiry data that is returned by the target device in response to the request is stored in the cache memory in place of previously stored inquiry data.

7. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the inquiry data from the cache memory is provided to the target device in response to the request regardless of whether or not the target device is busy.

8. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising storing inquiry data corresponding to each of a plurality of target devices, receiving requests for the inquiry data corresponding to one or more of the target devices, determining whether the corresponding target devices are busy and, for each of the target devices that is busy, returning the corresponding stored inquiry data, and, for each of the target devices that is not busy, returning the corresponding inquiry data returned by the target device.

9. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising: upon receiving a first request for inquiry data, forwarding the first request to the target device regardless of whether or not the target device is busy, storing inquiry data returned in response to the first request, forwarding inquiry data returned in response to the first request to a requesting device and, in response to subsequent requests, reading the inquiry data returned in response to the first request from the cache memory and providing the inquiry data returned in response to the first request in response to the subsequent requests.

10. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising determining whether a received command comprises a request for inquiry data and: if the received command comprises a request for inquiry data, reading the inquiry data from the cache memory and providing the inquiry data corresponding to the target device in response to the request; and if the received command does not comprise a request for inquiry data, forwarding the command to the target device for execution.

11. (Currently amended) A device comprising:

a router configured to route data between one or more hosts and one or more target devices; and

a cache memory coupled to the router;

wherein the router is configured to store inquiry data received from the one or more target devices and to provide at least a portion of the stored inquiry data in response to a request for inquiry data corresponding to one of the target devices that is busy.

12. (Original) The device of claim 11, wherein the router is configured to detect the inquiry data as the inquiry data is transmitted from the target device to a requesting host device.

13. (Original) The device of claim 11, wherein the router is configured to detect a request for the inquiry data as the request is routed from a host to the target device and copying the inquiry data which is returned by the target device in response to the request.

14. (Original) The device of claim 11, wherein the router is configured to determining whether the target device is busy, and provide the stored inquiry data if the target device is busy and providing inquiry data returned by the target device if the target device is not busy.

15. (Original) The device of claim 14, wherein, if the target device is not busy, the router is configured to store the inquiry data returned by the target device in response to the request in the cache memory in place of previously stored inquiry data.

16. (Original) The device of claim 11, wherein the router is configured to provide the inquiry data from the cache memory to the target device in response to the request regardless of whether or not the target device is busy.

17. (Original) The device of claim 11, wherein the router is configured to store inquiry data corresponding to each of a plurality of target devices, to receive requests for the inquiry data corresponding to one or more of the target devices, to determine whether the corresponding target devices are busy and to return the corresponding stored inquiry data for each of the target devices that is busy, and returning the corresponding inquiry data returned by the target device for each of the target devices that is not busy.

18. (Currently amended) The device of claim 11, wherein if the inquiry data is not stored in the cache, the router is configured to: upon receiving a first request for inquiry data, forward the first request to the target device regardless of whether or not the target device is busy; store inquiry data returned in response to the first request; forward inquiry data returned in response to the first request to a requesting device; and, in response to subsequent requests, reading the inquiry data returned in response to the first request from the cache ~~memory~~ and providing the inquiry data returned in response to the first request in response to the subsequent requests.

19. (Original) The device of claim 11, wherein the router is configured to determine whether a received command comprises a request for inquiry data and wherein the router is configured to: if the received command comprises a request for inquiry data, read the inquiry data from the memory and provide the inquiry data corresponding to the target device in response to the request; and if the received command does not comprise a request for inquiry data, forward the command to the target device for execution.

20. (Original) A storage area network comprising:
one or more host devices;
one or more sequential access devices; and
circuitry coupled between the one or more host devices and the one or more sequential access devices and coupled to a cache memory;
wherein the circuitry is configured
to receive from a first one of the host devices a request for inquiry data corresponding to a targeted one of the sequential access devices, and
to return inquiry data from the cache memory to the first host device.

21. (Original) The storage area network of claim 20, wherein the circuitry is configured:
if the targeted sequential access device is busy, to return inquiry data from the cache memory to the first host device; and
if the targeted sequential access device is not busy, to forward the request to the targeted sequential access device and return inquiry data received from the targeted sequential access device to the first host device.

22. (Currently Amended) A computer readable medium, wherein the computer readable medium contains one or more instructions which are configured to cause a computer to perform the method of using a router to cache inquiry data corresponding to a target device in a network having a plurality of client devices, the method comprising:

storing inquiry data corresponding to a target device in a cache memory;

receiving a request for the inquiry data corresponding to the target device;

reading the inquiry data from the cache memory; and

providing the inquiry data corresponding to the target device in response to the request.